Chapter 8
Democracy and Participation

Abstract What is the relation of democracy and participation to social justice? While the distributive theory offers an account of social justice at the level of abstracted principle, others focus their attention on specific conditions and practices that allow social injustice to emerge as a condition of social arrangements. Work by the philosopher Iris Marion Young offers a critical account of social justice, particularly in relation to concepts such as difference and oppression, and how these are implicated in social injustices such as exclusion, marginalisation and silencing. There are a number of key aspects related to issues of democracy and participation that could support social work efforts at empowerment, self-determination and inclusion. These are the nation-state and civil society, constitutionalism, freedom and liberty and the options for dealing with diversity within societies.

Introduction

Democracy has been seen as an important process for furthering social justice and as an antidote to the crisis of neoliberalism. But precisely, how and in what ways does it offer this hope? In order to consider the role of democracy and participation, we describe four major aspects that are important in understanding why democracy is important to social justice. The concepts we cover are: (1) the nation-state and civil society; (2) principles of constitutionalism and democracy; (3) conceptions of freedom; and (4) the idea of deep diversity for furthering processes of inclusion.

Nation-States and Civil Society

The state refers to "A political association that establishes sovereign power within a defined territorial area and possesses a monopoly of legitimate violence" (Harrison & Boyd, 2013, p. 17). This can be contrasted to the idea of the *nation,* which is based on identity and belonging, language, cultural and religious aspects as well as a sense

L. Watts and D. Hodgson, *Social Justice Theory and Practice for Social Work*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-3621-8_8

of history (Harrison & Boyd, 2013). Nation and state are often linked and here the term refers to "a form or political organisation and a political idea" (Heywood, 2000, pp. 252–253). Despite a history of being associated with cultural boundaries, most modern nation-states are considered to be deeply pluralist. Pluralism can also mean different things. In democratic terms, pluralism refers to the freedom of association. In liberal philosophical terms, pluralism relates to the idea of a public arena in which the state is an impartial arbiter of social and political life (Young, 1990).

The long history of thinking about the state has seen different ideological perspectives emerge about the source of the state's legitimacy. For liberals and socialists, the nation-state emerges from the *will* of those people subject to the rules, processes and practices of government. In contrast, for nationalists and conservatives, the nation-state is still primarily considered to be "based upon [an] ethnic or organic unity" (Heywood, 2000, p. 253). These different conceptions about where states derive legitimacy results in different arguments about inclusion and exclusion within states. Such arguments also lead to varying responses to minorities within the population. Indeed, sovereign power rests within the nation-state but it can sometimes rest uneasily alongside nationalist sentiments. This has posed problems for various *states* where conservative or nationalist forces have attempted to reassert particular forms of nationhood, sometimes with violent and oppressive consequences. A contemporary example is the rise of white nationalism across Poland that led to a 60,000 strong march with slogans reminiscent of Nazi chants from the 1930s (The Guardian, 2017). Such populism can pose significant issues for democratic nation-states.

Despite its unsettling history, the nation-state "provides the conceptual foundation for most national studies of social policies, politics and ideologies" within the social policy field (Clarke, 2005, p. 410), and it both enables and constrains the field of social work. Nation-states may have different political and constitutional regimes at work. For example, they can be authoritarian, totalitarian, led by dictators, religious leaders or they may be democratic. Somewhat regardless of their regime, nation-states remain the foremost mechanism for the delivery of human rights and the distribution of welfare, even as they can be sites for violence and oppression. As Dauvergne (2008, cited in Kesby, 2012, p. 15) points out "there is no empty, non-national space where people can live beyond the reach of [a] nation". It is unlikely that we can simply do away with nation-states in the foreseeable future, and thus any hopes for social justice rest on ensuring nation-states implement just and fair institutions.

Social Justice in the Nation-State

Amartya Sen (2009, cited in Tully, 2013) outlines two main Enlightenment traditions for thinking about justice significant to our discussion of democracy and participation here: one is the *transcendental-institutional* approach and the other is *realisation-focused* approach. The transcendental-institutional approach will be familiar to social work as it is based on social contract theories, whereby states are formed from the collective agreement of people within a territory, who cede their power to the state to

act on their behalf. The ideas of justice within this social contract tradition have been explicated in different ways by famous thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and in the twentieth century, John Rawls (Sen, 2015). This tradition focuses on what ideals institutions within nation states must live up to if they are to deliver justice. It also is the basis of modern nation-states being seen as the key mechanism for "the legal status of nationality …[without which] there is nowhere left for the stateless person to reside, leaving them perilously exposed" (Kesby, 2012, p. 14). This tradition has primarily "…concentrated on identifying perfectly *just* social arrangements and took the characterisation of perfectly *just institutions* to be the principle and often the only identified task of a theory of justice" (Sen, 2015, online). For social work, the critical question and site of analysis, critique and work are institutions within the nation-state: Are they just? If not, what would be ideal?

In contrast, the realisation-focused approach comes to us via a range of diverse Enlightenment thinkers such as Smith, Wollstonecraft, Marx and Mill. These thinkers had different approaches from each other, but they all had a common interest in considering injustice from the perspective of how it operates in "people's lives and [through] the actual development of their capacities" (Tully, 2013, p. 222). Sen (2015, online) states that this includes "their behaviour, their social interaction and other factors that significantly impact on what actually happens". This approach does not begin with asking what a *just* society would be like, but instead, asks what *remedies for injustice* might be possible within society. Moreover, Sen suggests that any remedy for injustice must be tested through forms of public reasoning and reflection. In other words, the test for justice is people's experiences and the *degree to which they can voice them*. Such discussion and debate occurs primarily within the context of nation-states. Thus, Sen claims that:

> [D]emocracy is more than a collection of specific institutions, such as balloting and elections – these institutions are important too, but as parts of a bigger engagement involving dialogue, freedom of information, and unrestricted discussion. (Sen, 2011, p. 2)

Moreover, Tully (2013) argues that this distinction between these Enlightenment traditions (institutions and public discourse) logically leads to Sen's main thesis that "…democracy as public reason and government by discussion is internally related to the realization of justice" (p. 222). Hence, in this conception of justice, participation within society is considered a crucial aspect of social justice (Carlson, Nguyen, & Reinardy, 2013). We see this as a prime site for social work engagement by ensuring that the institutions of society are tested through the use of public reason and reflection to ensure that they are not contributing to forms of exclusion and oppression. In short, institutions must be critically examined; lived experience must be given a voice.

The Nation-State as Coordinating Activities

Now that we have discussed the relation between the nation-state and the need for democratic discussion and participation, we would like to propose adopting Young's

(2000, p. 158) suggestion that it is helpful to move away from seeing the nation-state as a *place*, although clearly nation-states constitute a territory. Instead, it is possible to see the nation-state as a series of coordinating activities. This helps social work to see where democratic participation might be possible. In this vein the nation-state can be seen as the coordination of:

> activities and institutions of legal regulation, enforcement backed by coercion, legislatively mandated co-ordination and public services, along with the managerial and technical apparatus necessary to carry out these functions effectively. (Young, 2000, p. 158)

Here, it is clear that Young is conceptualising the nation-state also as a set of institutions. Cohen and Arato (1992, cited in Young, 2000) developed an analysis, based on the philosophy of Jurgen Habermas, about the distinction between lifeworld and system. Based on this distinction, we can differentiate nation-state, economy and civil society by the different mediums of coordination activities. For example, authorised power is the medium for nation-states, money is the medium for the economy, and for civil society, the medium is *communication* (Young, 2000); the latter is a central space for social work engagement. Thus, the space for democratic deliberation and reasoned reflection on injustice, including proposals for what to do about it, often happens within the sphere of civil society.

Civil Society

Civil society has a fairly contested history and somewhat defies exact definition. Conceptions of it stretch back to Aristotle and the notion of the *polis* as the "association of associations" (Hodgkinson & Foley, 2009, p. 4). Howard et al. (2009) contend that "most contemporary scholars define civil society today as that public space between the state, market place, and the informal personalized life of the family" (p. 76). However, Young (2000) proposes to distinguish between the state, the economy and the various interpersonal and associations that form independently from the state and the economy. Young (2000, p. 158) makes the point that distinguishing the economy from the civil sphere is important to her analysis of how the civil sphere might have a "role in promoting social justice". In light of this, Young (2000, p, 158) defines civil society as:

> a third sector of private associations that are relatively autonomous from both state and economy. They are voluntary, in the sense that they are neither mandated nor run by state institutions, but spring from the everyday lives and activities of communities of interest. The associations of this third sector, moreover, operate not for profit.

Civil society is sometimes referred to as the third sector and this remains a significant site of action for social work—considerable numbers of social workers practice within civil society. In Australia, and increasingly in other countries, a significant proportion of social support to vulnerable people is delivered through organisations and activities situated in this sector. It has become complicated in recent years by

contractual arrangements that have injected market approaches to service delivery into this previously protected sector (McDonald, 2006). Nevertheless, the civil sphere remains an important site for possible democratic action and participation. The other reason for the significance of this sector is the role it can play in limiting state power via activism and strategies of democratic deliberation. Moreover, activities in civil societies within nation-states can have impacts in global terms, in the area of environmental issues and human rights for example (Farris & Dancy, 2017). Wilson (2012) gives examples to include "citizen's groups including labor organizations; community groups; faith-related and ecumenical coalitions; women's, environmental, indigenous peoples', seniors', and student organizations; anti-poverty alliances; and nongovernmental organizations…" (p. 19). Relatedly, the Social Development Goals (SDGs) are an example where "the highly consultative process of civil society engagement…[lead] to the final consensus [and] created [a] potentially transformative document that contrasts with the technocratic and top-down nature of the [Millennium Development Goals] MDGs" (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016, p. 122). Despite the hope for a global version of civil society we should be cautious in adopting an uncritical stance.

The reason for caution is because global civil society does not have the same interdependence with a state or economy (Bowden, 2006), and therefore, its ability to hold global institutions accountable is more limited. This is because within nation-states, the market, state and civil society should be in balance with each other in order to promote rule of law and to provide some guarantees against despots and other forms of tyranny (Bowden, 2006). Actually, some nation-states have very small civil spheres and larger state institutions, while others have larger market economies and smaller numbers of state institutions. Young (2000, p. 156) argues that the while "associational life of civil society can do much to promote self-determination" and thus social justice, state institutions remain important to efforts to address structural oppression and discrimination. Social justice work requires not only engagement and struggle to expand democratic engagement within civil society, but also needs to support and struggle for fair and *just* state institutions as well. The role of institutions in distributive theories as outlined by Rawls is discussed in Chap. 7 (this volume). This question about the role of institutions and democratic deliberation within nation-states and civil society is taken up in the next section where we explain a particular conception of constitutionalism.

Constitutionalism and the Limits to Democracy

There is, in political philosophy, two main ways in which philosophers approach the question of politics. The first is through its subject matter, and this kind of philosophy is to inquire into political matters. In this tradition, philosophers take as their subject questions pertaining to structures of society and how power is utilised (Nichols & Singh, 2014). John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin are examples of political philosophers in this tradition. The other tradition, according to Nichols and Singh (2014), is one

concerned with the *function* of politics. Philosophers in this tradition "ask the question of how it is that philosophy…can perform an act, exercise a function, or have an effect beyond itself" (Nichols & Singh, 2014, p. 4). Thinkers in this tradition include Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt and James Tully. In this tradition, politics is seen as a practice where the *struggle itself constitutes a form of freedom*. The role of politics in this tradition:

> [S]tarts from the present struggles and problems of politics and seeks to clarify and transform the normal understanding of them so as to open up the field of possible ways of thinking and acting freely in response. (Tully, 2008, cited in Nichols & Singh, 2014, p. 4)

This tradition is in line with the realisation approach discussed earlier, but it picks up another way of seeing justice as a "tradition of democracy as non-violent cooperative self-government: of the people exercising the capabilities of self-government together in their social and economic activities on the commons" (Tully, 2013, p. 223). This tradition draws attention to the fact that people have always engaged in forms of self-rule outside conceptions of the nation-state, and outside of social contracts, and various forms of representative government. These ideas have been taken forward in order to think about democracy and constitutionalism differently, that is, to think about it outside current discourses of Western liberal democracies that rely too much on a normative and statist Western world-view. These ideas will have powerful resonances for social work, particularly in areas of practice such as group work, community organising and advocacy. For example, it might help us clarify when and where processes are democratic and where and when they can be utilised to facilitate hearing people's points of view about the conditions of their lives.

However, we need to move beyond a purely Western conception of constitutionalism. In order to look at this issue of constitutional democracy differently, Tully (1995, p. 1) turned his attention to recovering the meaning of constitutionalism in order to answer the question: can a modern constitution recognise and accommodate cultural diversity? He says yes, but only if we move beyond the narrow versions outlined within the age of imperialism associated with the Enlightenment. We need to recognise the complex array of languages and cultures in existence in order to answer questions about how to live together and to accord due recognition to others. There are, in existence, familiar aspects of constitutionalism that come to us in the modern period through three dominant schools of political thought: liberalism, nationalism and communitarianism. These dominant ways of thinking have cut across and marginalised other practices and responses to democracy that may provide more avenues for engaging with cultural diversity (Tully, 1995).

At the same time, constitutions do a number of things important to thinking about participation. They set the conditions of possibility for how people live and treat each other; they establish a field of recognition; and, they specify how and what way claims can be made for things like fair treatment, recognition of need and redress, and claims for care and justice. Thus, we can state that constitutionalism is a requirement that the *exercise of power* in a given political association or territory "should be exercised in accordance with, and through a general system of principles, rules and procedures, including procedures for amending any principle, rule or procedure"

(Tully, 2002, p. 205). This is sometimes referred to as the rule of law, however, this is not to specify the kinds of law—it might also include common and customary law. Institutions within a constitutional frame are part of the coordinating mechanisms of the state described previously by Young. What this means is that a constitution is the basis of authorised power within a state, but even in democratic societies, such constitutions operate with:

> A degree of separation or disembeddedness from the activities of those who are subject to it [but it] has the compliance capacity to structure or even constitute the field of recognition and interaction of the people subject to it. (Tully, 2008a, p. 466)

The specific field of recognition that becomes established may be an area of contestation, but as Tully suggests, constitutions must have procedures and processes by which the rules can be amended. One example to illustrate this point is the way modern nation-states establish entry requirements for people visiting or migrating to their territory. Borders and sovereignty were largely established through successive waves of imperialism that have established nation-states across the world. In fact, international law outlines territory and there are few "non-governed spaces" (Kesby, 2012, p. 15) in the world now. International law also sets out processes for recognition between states, which involves rules about who resides where and on what basis. The approach is described by Heywood (2000, p. 247) as *intergovernmentalism* because this involves interaction between entities on the basis of "sovereign independence" thus preserving the power of entities to regulate their own affairs.

Second, modern states establish a set of principles, rules and procedures aimed at recognising some claims for entry into their territory (citizens, holiday visitors, employment migration, humans) against others (stateless people, ineligible humans, noncitizens). Kesby (2012, p. 16) suggests that "[I]n customary international law, and international human rights, admission to a state primarily depends upon a person's nationality". The mandate for these rules rests within the relation between governed and governments and within the territory in question. However, with an increase in international law regimes this relation between governed and governments has become increasingly distant, which may explain why many people feel like they no longer have a voice. The principles, rules and procedures should be subject to amendment via law and democratic deliberation under this conception of constitutionalism. Moreover, associations within civil society can influence this through lobbying representatives, holding public forums, creating media campaigns and through other forms of activism. Such activism need not be inclusive. We have seen in recent years many nation-states exercising their discretion toward admitting people who are not considered their own nationals (Kesby, 2012). This emphasis on nationality for nation-states can have important consequences for people who become stateless as it "relegates a person to a no man's land of arbitrary treatment" (Kesby, 2012, p. 19).

Constitutionalism and Popular Sovereignty

The fact that laws, procedures, processes and policies are made at some distance from those subjected to them is called the *autonomy principle* and it is a key feature of these forms of constitutional democratic states. Tully (2008) points out that this form of constitutionalism is found not only at the nation-state level but also in international law and supra-national organisations such as the European Union, the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation. International legal regimes, however, are negotiated outside of another key principle that Tully considers important to the prospects of justice. This is a principle of popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty is the idea that there should be a meaningful link between the people and their representatives who take decisions on their behalf. In many international regimes, this is not the case. Popular sovereignty emerges from the people within a given political association/territory who are subject to same rules and processes, but are also able to engage in the "exchange of public reasons in democratic practices of deliberation" (Tully, 2002, p. 205). This kind of discussion can happen via polls and elections, but picking up on our earlier point, it also occurs within the civil society via political participation.

In summary, the two principles of *democratic legitimacy* and *constitutionalism* can be considered as "guiding norms for the critical discussion of the conditions of *legitimacy* of contemporary forms of political association". (Tully, 2002, p. 205) There are six features that characterise democratic government (Tully, 2002), and these are presented in Table 8.1 with examples.

It should be clear from these examples that engaging in democratic participation can happen at a number of levels within nation-states and civil society, which is the key point. Tully suggests that engagement in different kinds of political dialogues, democratic discussion and struggles is what makes people citizens and is a core part of contesting forms of social suffering and exclusion.

Three trends complicate this situation (Tully, 2002). The first is the way supranational organisations facilitate the globalisation of capital (see Chap. 4, this volume). The impost of "hundreds of global regulatory regimes, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organisation…constitute complex processes of global constitutionalism" (Tully, 2002, p. 211) but they do so without the principle of democratic legitimacy. This trend of globalised capital affects even great initiatives like the Social Development Goals because the underlying unequal economic and social relations remain unaddressed (O'Manique & Fourie, 2016). In other words, they are *not* subject to adequate forms of democratic discussion and debate.

The second trend is where political associations and political power has become dispersed across ever smaller subunits, levels, cities, nation-states, regions, communities and networks. This trend is partly fuelled by an increasing politics of recognition, which can be seen as a positive. This dispersing and fracturing of political associations and political power has, however, also meant that there is less collective solidarity against the relative power of transnational corporations and the

Table 8.1 Features of democratic legitimacy

	Features of democratic legitimacy	Example
1	These principles act as critical and abstract guides that orient participants to norms of cooperation and communication	A group of residents from different cultural and social backgrounds come together to engage in discussion about the building of a bypass road proposed by their local government
2	Each principle is equally basic and both should be present for a democratic association to be considered legitimate	A society with an overemphasis on democracy without any rules of procedure will be at the mercy of the majority—this is populism, which can result in a form of ethnic or racist exclusion. A society that follows only the rules and does not allow these to be contested or amended suffers from a democratic deficit—it is a bureaucratic environment that does not incorporate natural justice
3	People must have room to disagree on matters before them. All aspects, including the rules under which they deliberate, are open to disagreement	A group comes together to engage in deliberation and in doing so they create a set of rules for the process of deliberation. As the process progresses, some members begin to express disagreement with the process of deliberation itself as well as the substantive content of the issues. This is to be recognised as a normal aspect to democratic legitimation
4	Constitutional rules are always in the position of beginning again or of being capable of amendment via democratic deliberation and struggle	A private members bill is introduced in parliament to initiate measures for medically assisted dying. The bill represents years of democratic deliberation and activism amongst citizens, interest groups, churches and politicians
5	Practices of government are dispersed both within and beyond nation-states and are characterised by deep diversity and forms of political globalisation	Deliberation s about the use of fracking involves action coordination across government, non-government, voluntary organisations, researchers, amongst citizens and networks at the local, nation-state and global levels
6	Citizenship is a *process* of engagement in practices of deliberation via conferral of rights and duties within the constitutional rules and processes. This is called *citizenisation* (Tully, 2002, p. 210)	A person takes part in a Reconciliation Study Circle (Broughton & Durnan, 1993) to learn about the history of Indigenous people; a resident joins in with an action against development that will destroy their local wetland; a citizen hands out “how to vote cards” at the local election booth

regulatory regimes of the international bodies such as the World Trade Organisation or the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The third trend is the decline of mechanisms enabling public exchange of reasons in the deliberative sense. This has meant a reduction in spaces and processes of democratic deliberation about the conditions of our lives. Increasingly, the political class is shaped by their experiences within government or corporations where processes of democratic deliberation are absent and where there is little likelihood of *citizenisation* occurring. These three trends work together to insulate growing global social and economic inequalities from public awareness, democratic discussion, and reform (Tully, 2002, p. 213).

Why is this important to social work's hopes for social justice? It seems that one of the key ways to struggle effectively against these enormous inequalities in wealth and well-being is through the exercise of democratic freedoms in the most effective forums we can find, at every level, and in every field of practice. Such forums can be on a local scale, but they may, at times, be within larger social movements that call attention to unjust relations and practices.

Tully (2002, pp. 226–227) has four suggestions on this front that social work might take up. First, we should look for opportunities to engage and initiate processes to "expose, criticise and overcome local relations of exclusion and to enter prevailing institutions or invent *ad hoc* practices of deliberation". An example might be where social workers raise issues within their area about practices that further marginalise homeless people by excluding them from public amenities. This is just a first step to being able to call on others to engage in the practice of deliberation which Tully (2002) refers to as *negotiations*.

Second, if these bids to enter into negotiation are successful then deliberations about the issues can begin and this will involve an exchange of reasons about the issues, but these should embed processes of reciprocity and inclusion appropriate to the situation. An example might be where the issues result in a public forum to discuss the issue of homelessness. Such a forum should include people most directly affected in as well as concerned others.

Third, once agreements have been reached the process should not stop there: "critical analysis should proceed beyond the agreement because the agreement…will always be less than perfect, partial, subject to reasonable disagreement" (Tully, 2002, p. 227). Social workers involved could engage in analysis of agreements to see if they are still meeting the needs of the affected group.

Fourth, we should attend to the implementation of any agreements using the same deliberative negotiation principles as in the previous steps. This means we should not consider implementation to be a different matter to the process of reaching an agreement, because implementation is also subject to democratic discussion and process (Tully, 2002). Moreover, all this is always capable of starting again. An example is where implementation does not go according to the interpretation of people who participated in the forum, and therefore, it would precipitate another round of negotiation. This is Tully's main point: that constitutional rules, understood as the conditions that form the way we live together, are always subject to democratic debate and are therefore subject to amendment and struggle. Contesting these and

holding them to account, in big or small ways, is to engage in "practices of freedom" (Tully, 2000, p. 469).

Why is democratic participation and deliberation important to the aims of social justice held by social work? The reason is that it places some practices social work already regularly undertakes within a wider frame, and we can utilise this picture of the guiding norms of constitutional democracy to help us see further ways to deliberate, contest and agree on the rules and claims made for justice. We also think a more encompassing idea of democratic constitutionalism can widen our scope for action with people currently not included due to narrow conceptions of what it means to be a citizen. For example, extending democratic deliberation beyond the nation-state is a central plank of Sen's (2015) approach to justice. Young (2000) also sees deliberative mechanisms as key to contesting forms of injustice. The other key aspect to democratic deliberation and participation is the notion of freedom.

Freedom and Equality

According to scholar Skinner (2016), freedom (or liberty, used here interchangeably) is a concept with a long history, and as such, it can be traced genealogically. What this means is that there are different conceptions of liberty in operation and these are not reducible to a single narrative, but instead, represent a variety of valid ways of conceiving of freedom. In reality, they represent different trajectories of thought, deliberation and debate about what it means to be free. Further, each has different implications when thinking about the issue of social justice, and by extension, democracy and participation (Skinner, 2012). In this discussion, we will be considering the different conceptions of freedom and what barriers prevent its expression in people's lives.

Skinner (2016) discusses freedom in relation to what he describes as the Anglophone case. He acknowledges that there are likely other conceptions of freedom, but concentration on this specific case acknowledges the extensive influence that modernity has had on contemporary alliterations about freedom. As social work is a child of this tradition, it has some resonances for our purposes. Second, Skinner discusses freedom in the context of notions of the nation-state and therefore the discussion presumes that it is citizens of a *state* with whom we are concerned. We will discuss why this is problematic later. Nonetheless, in this genealogical view of liberty it is possible to claim that:

> For individuals to enjoy freedom as citizens of a state, [*they must have*] (1) POWER to act in pursuit of a given option (or least alternative) and (2) [*not be subject to forms of*] DEPENDENCE OR INTERFERENCE OR [*be prevented from exercising aspects of*] SELF REALISATION. (Skinner, 2016, emphasis in brackets added)

Aspects of this statement require clarification and comment but space forbids an extended discussion. Instead, this discussion will start with the issue of *power to act* and discuss what is meant by *non-interference*, *dependence*, and *self-realisation*.

The power to act to pursue your own options is a deeply held value in liberal ideology and is closely related to discussions of democracy and autonomy. It has a central place in any discussion of freedom. It presumes that a person can act on their own behalf, can formulate intentions, make plans and pursue their own goals. Human beings employ a range of capacities to do this and these powers are considered to be inherent to human beings (Sayer, 2011). It is this aspect that is at the core of Sen's conception of freedom, which is "seen in the form of individual capabilities to do things that a person has reason to value" (Sen, 1999, cited in Carlson et al., 2013, p. 273). This means people exercise choices about how and where to live, and they invariably pursue meaningful relations and projects. Liberals consider this power as paramount to the opportunity for human beings to realise their potential. Democrats see this power as central to democratic discussion and participation. The problem is that there are many conditions that may represent barriers to the exercise of such freedoms. Such barriers may be structural (Young, 2000) and/or cultural. Young (2007) outlines what structural injustice as a barrier to freedom means:

> Persons suffer injustice by virtue of structural inequality when their group social positioning means that the operation of diverse institutions and practices *conspires to limit their opportunities to achieve well-being*. (p. 61, emphasis added)

By well-being, Young (2007) means exercising choices and pursuing projects that people value—in the broadest sense of the term. Culture-based injustice is where:

> they are not free to express themselves as they wish, to associate with others with whom they share forms of expression and practices, or to socialise their children in the cultural ways they value, or when their group situation is such that they bear significant economic or political cost in trying to pursue a distinctive way of life. (Young, 2007, p. 61)

Civil society, described above, remains a key site for contesting these forms of structural and cultural injustice. There is, however, another aspect that constitutes a significant barrier to freedom for many people, and that is different forms of dependence.

Dependence—Freedom as Non-domination

Skinner refers to dependence in his genealogy of freedom, but Pettit (1997) refers to it as non-domination. The concept of non-domination began with debates about the *content* of freedom, and can be traced back to discussions in Ancient Rome about what makes a man [sic] a *liber homo,* or a free man (Skinner, 2016). Freedom as non-domination is an argument about what prevents a person from being free, and it is different in kind to arguments about non-interference, which we discuss below. Pettit (1997, p. 5) asserts that:

> Being unfree consists rather in being subject to arbitrary sway: being subject to the potentially capricious will or the potentially idiosyncratic judgement of another.

Skinner (2016) and Pettit (1997) argue for a reacquaintance with this conception of freedom because it picks up on the experience of domination that many people experience, which ideas of freedom as non-interference simply do not capture. In this formulation, a person is not free if someone or something can interfere with their interests or pursuit of goals. They are not free if they are dependent on another's arbitrary will. Likewise, when Sen makes a case for the capabilities approach, he emphasises a "connection between freedom and non-dependency" (Pettit, 2001, p. 18). Situations of dependency will be familiar to social workers—for instance: employees who cannot raise issues with their employer for fear of losing their jobs; women who fear their partner's violence; people who rely on benefits from the state where there are mandatory obligations; and, older people who rely on their adult children for care and support.

Awareness of dependence on the arbitrary will of another can create self-censorship that may undermine a person's power to form an intention to pursue a given action. This is the second way in which relations of dependence undermine freedom. In this view, a state of dependence does not turn on being a particular category of person. Rather, the lack of freedom is based on the concrete existence of subjection to the arbitrary power of another. Nevertheless, as is clear from Young's (2007) description of structural and cultural inequality, forms of dependence can become ramified in institutions and social processes that position people and make them *more likely* to experience arbitrary treatment; for example, people who are unemployed; people with disabilities; and, people in institutional care. Furthermore, this may be domain specific—it could be that a person enjoys the full formal rights to vote and participate in democratic deliberation, but in another domain may be subject to the arbitrary will of their carer. In this case, we might say that even though they may be able to vote, they are not free if they experience a state of dependence in their home. We will return to the implications of this for democratic participation below, but for now, we turn our attention to what non-interference refers to in relation to freedom.

Non-interference

Of all the conceptions of liberty in the West, non-interference has the longest pedigree, primarily due to its use in liberal political theories (Skinner, 1998). Indeed, Pettit (2001, p. 19) suggests that:

> When reformers like Bentham and Paley expanded the constituency of the state's concern to include women and servants, they replaced the old idea that the state should promote the freedom as non-domination of its subjects - an ideal of freedom that had been feasible when only mainstream, propertied males were in the picture - with the idea that it would be enough to promote their freedom as non-interference. This allowed them to think that women and servants who lived under supposedly kindly masters would be free.

The situation in this example is highly problematic because it illustrates the exchange of one form of domination for another under the pretence of liberation.

Non-interference can mean that there should be *no* interference by external agencies (other agents, or the state, for example) in the pursuit of an individual's aims and intentions. In terms of democracy, non-interference constitutes a form of negative liberty where the nation-state guarantees basic civil rights of non-interference with citizens, but it does nothing to address barriers to participation.

It is hard to discuss non-interference without discussing the ways in which interference might limit people's freedom. Interference can consist of two main types associated with external agencies. It can be physical, or by acting on the will of another through forms of coercion (Skinner, 2016). In terms of physical interference, this refers to actions that render the pursuit of your own goals and purposes impossible. An example might be where you are prevented from accessing your own property or you are compelled to do something under threats of harm. In this case, you would not be considered free. The second way is by external agencies interfering with your will through coercion (Skinner, 2016). For instance, mandatory drug testing for citizens who are welfare recipients. If you do not comply, the state (an external agent) will cut off your only form of support making this a credible and serious threat to your wellbeing.

There is another way in which interference may occur to prevent freedom and this is a fairly new addition to modern conceptions of freedom. This form of interference is on a person's will, but it is not from an external agency. Rather, it is from within the person themselves. It might be that they misperceive the social and economic forces that create their social positioning and are acting against their best interests under a false ideology or false consciousness. This idea will be familiar to critical and structural social workers who attempt to work at raising people's consciousness about these relations of interference so that people can live more authentically (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009; Mullaly, 2007). According to Skinner (2016), other sources of internal interference are those due to passions and forms of inauthenticity. An example of a passion-based internal interference familiar to social workers is where people use violence (Chung, 2018). In terms of inauthenticity, we might also see this in people who are undertaking a job they hate because they see it as socially acceptable or where people undergo plastic surgery in order to fit a particular standard of beauty.

Self-realisation

Self-realisation is the final aspect of freedom. This is where human beings use opportunities to develop their human nature and capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011), and may include steps towards self-realisation as a political or spiritual being (Skinner, 2012). Other forms of self-realisation might include being able to engage in cultural practices and the use of one's "senses, imagination and thought" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33). The capabilities approach picks up many of the aspects of self-realisation as a form of freedom and it is a central part of Nussbaum's (2011) list of capabilities. For some people, simply coming to have a voice is central part of realising their agency and

is often a first step towards freedom. Napoleon and Friedland (2014) suggest that "[moving] out [from] these silences [within]…is a vital aspect to recognizing agency and understanding oneself as a citizen" (p. 207). Many things may interfere with this kind of development and flourishing: poverty, war, violence, structural and cultural oppression, lack of access to opportunity, and lack of access to forms of redress are just a few examples (see also Chap. 1, this volume). Social work with people experiencing marginalisation, oppression, violence and poverty uses practices of self-determination and empowerment that emphasise human agency (Parsell, Eggins, & Marston, 2017). These kinds of practices support the development of this kind of freedom for people.

Having discussed these different conceptions of freedom it is possible to see all three conceptions at work throughout social work practice (dependence, non-interference, and self-realisation). Any conception of democratic participation relies on ideas of free interchange about the conditions in which people live. From this discussion, it is possible to see how this free exchange is complicated by a number of factors: forms of interference, both physical and internal; relations of domination that create forms of dependence and thus become barriers to freedom; and, the lack of opportunities that people face in developing their capabilities. We turn now to consider the last of our four aspects we see as important ideas for supporting democratic participation, that of deep diversity.

Deep Diversity

Most of us now live in conditions of deep diversity. What does this mean? It is a phrase used by Taylor (1992) to describe the fact that human diversity is deeper than conceptualised by liberal and other political theorists. Laden (2001) explains:

> As both political activity and political theorizing have become more inclusive of the full panoply of human diversity, older answers to this question [of how to share political associations and principles] have been found wanting, charged with relying on exclusion and assimilation to achieve their purported legitimating agreement. One theme that emerges from this critical literature is that human diversity is deep: it is not a surface phenomenon that covers over a common human core. Robust accounts of our common human nature have always erased or excluded some people. *Forging legitimate political principles that neither exclude nor assimilate thus requires coming to terms with the fact of deep diversity*. (p. 1, emphasis added)

One of the key outcomes of this recognition of deep diversity has been a turn to thinking about how to engage with this fact through our political systems and in response to the many struggles and claims for recognition around the world (Tully, 1995). Indeed, leading multiculturalism philosopher Kymlicka (2009, p. 371) suggests that there has been a large corpus of work published in recent years that "attempts at formulating a normative theory of minority rights and examining how minority rights relate to broader political values (such as freedom, equality, democracy, and citizenship) and broader normative frameworks (such as liberalism, com-

munitarianism, and republicanism)". This is why we have included it here. Laden and Owen (2007, p. 9) argue that "many philosophers and political theorists…found th[e] basic liberal framework inadequate for handling questions of diversity that are broader and touch on different matters than those that stem from doctrinal disputes among European Christians".

Deep diversity has implications for democracies because deliberation depends on communication with diverse others. With the increase of different minorities and ethnic groups claiming recognition within nation-states, Kymlicka (1995, p. 189) argues that "if there is a viable way to promote a sense of solidarity and common purpose in a multination state, it will involve accommodating, rather than subordinating, national identities". It is not just that there are minorities to be accommodated, but there are also groups within nation-states that have diverse ways of acting politically too. This is why Charles Taylor proposed the process of deep diversity in the context of Canada grappling with these issues in the 1990s. Kymlicka (1995) draws on Taylor in his discussion about how a nation-state can hold together under the tensions of different cultural groups and claims for recognition. He suggests that not only do we need a diversity of approaches but we also need a commitment to the *value* of diversity. Taylor offers one such approach which we think is promising due to its dialogical format. We think it fits with existing social work empowerment and critical practices. Taylor's approach, summarised by Tully (2012), has four main components:

1. Deep diversity refers to the **kinds of belonging of peoples within a national context**—this point recognises the existence of different modes of belonging within nation-states. Historically, these modes of belonging have been based on civil and other rights, but this is no longer enough to recognise diverse modes of being. Taylor suggested that to engage with diversity, we should adopt a first-person perspective rather than trying to understand these modes of being through third person (objective) concepts usually borrowed from the law. This means asking the question of oneself: *what language do I use about the issue of culture?* And *what is the language that we use with each other in public space?* To take a first-person perspective allows for diverse people to belong to a wider polity, but they can belong to that polity in different ways. An example is where you have three people all from different cultural groups but they all identify as Australian or British. They are bearers of civil liberties and belong together in a common polity, but *how* they belong may have particular cultural differences.
2. **Mutual recognition**—the idea that partners in negotiations about these modes of belonging to the polity must engage with each other mutually and from a first-person perspective, rather than at the level of abstraction of the third person, or through some kind of legal or social category of the label. This means that people act in these negotiations as free people with affiliations and capabilities specific to them, and they recognise this freedom in their negotiating partners too.
3. **Dialogue**—the main mechanism for engaging with deep diversity is dialogue. This category has three features:

a. Dialogue involves a process of each party bringing their prejudgements into the dialogue for critical examination. These prejudgements are called into question, along with the very structures of injustice that have been the reason for the forms of misrecognition at the centre of the engagement in the first place.
b. The *form* of dialogue is not oriented to agreement, but is instead oriented to mutual understanding. Thus, parties to a dialogue exchange reasons as to why they want forms of recognition to occur in particular ways. This is important to understanding the various kinds of social suffering caused by different forms of misrecognition and injustice.
c. Dialogue partners should expect to be changed by their participation in the process as they move to mutual understanding. That is, each party should be transformed by the encounter so that their view may be changed, enlarged, or to become more nuanced.

4. **Fusion of horizons**—this is where the partners begin to create a new space and language, which is "constructed in the course of dialogue but is not the language of the hegemon, or of the dominant majority, it's not a language handed to us by a court or by a political theorist, it's not the language of the subaltern—it's the language of the middle ground" (Tully, 2012, online).

This kind of approach to deep diversity offers a hope for addressing the recognition struggles for peoples who have experienced past and ongoing injustices, as well as addressing contemporary issues of how to live together in multicultural and multinational states. Tully (2012) suggests that such dialogues allow us to see our interdependencies in ways that using languages of law—developed outside of the dialogue—cannot deliver. The other benefit is that this approach embeds an ethic of mutual care as fellow citizens with different modes of belonging. Lastly, Tully contends that this dialogical practice of deep diversity involves using a particular practical approach—one must enter the dialogue process using the very mode of being that the dialogue calls forth. In other words, the nature of the dialogue must be its own model of justice in action, and should not be conducted as further forms of silencing, domination or abuse. We think this approach has resonances for engaging in deliberations about the kinds of structural and cultural injustice outlined by Young earlier in this chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have surveyed four major conceptual areas important for considering democracy and participation: the nation-state and civil society; constitutionalism; freedom and liberty; and, deep diversity. The presumption we hold is that democratic participation is key to addressing social injustices within and outside of diverse nation-states. We think social work has a role to play in this aspect of con-

testing structural and cultural injustice, but we need good understandings of where and how to focus our efforts. Recall that we are seeing democratic participation as:

> the participation of citizens in the ways in which their conduct is governed by the exercise of political power in any system or practice of governance. Citizens participate by 'having a say' and 'negotiating' how power is exercised and who exercises it. (Tully, 2008b, p. 145)

Thus, social workers are called on to support, advocate and work with people in their struggles over systems or practices that are unfair or unjust. This expansive notion of democratic participation offers a significant resource for social work in the struggle for social justice. This will entail using processes to advocate for fair and just institutions within their respective nation-states, by engaging the twin principles of constitutionalism and democracy. It seems to us that social workers everywhere work with people—whose freedom, whether from domination, oppression or forms of interference—often struggle to take up their powers as citizens to contest the conditions in which they find themselves. If we are to take the mission of social justice seriously, forms of democratic participation are an important part of our professional toolkit. It means looking for opportunities to support people in developing their voices and engaging in the processes of speaking back to power—a familiar practice for social workers. It might also mean taking up our own citizenship responsibilities as a "social worker/citizen", and thereby engaging in democratic processes of dialogue and deliberation, wherever we are.

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